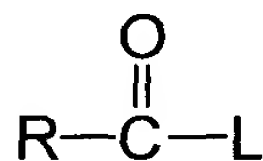


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1. (Amended) A method for the preparation of a non-finished textile component comprising the steps of providing a non-finished textile component, saturating said textile component with an aqueous bleaching solution comprising hydrogen peroxide and a hydrophobic bleaching agent, and allowing said bleaching solution to remain in contact with said textile component for a period of time sufficient to bleach said textile component wherein the resultant treated textile component has a whiteness value on the CIE index of at least about 70 or a fiber degradation increase of less than about 25%.

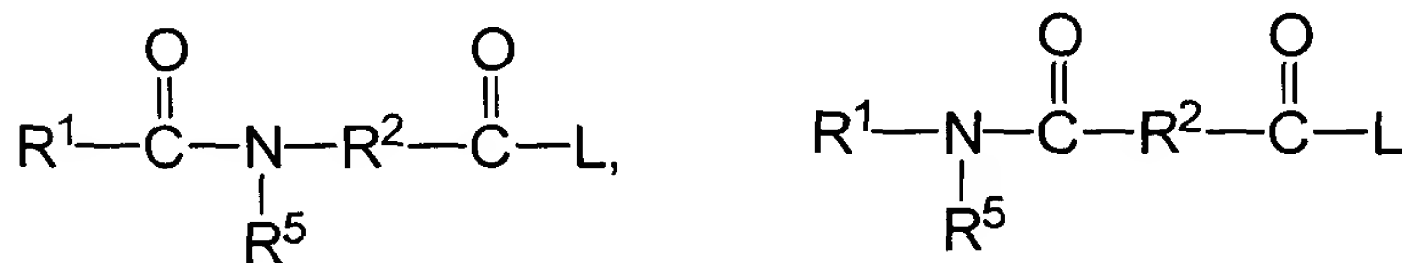
3. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 2 wherein said bleaching solution comprises hydrogen peroxide and a hydrophobic bleach activator selected from the group consisting of:

a) a bleach activator of the general formula:



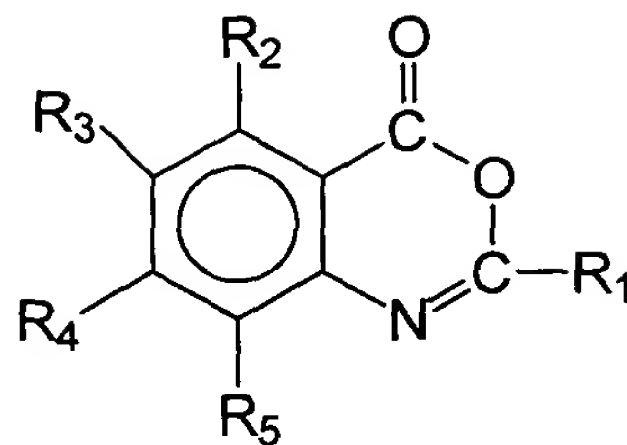
wherein R is an alkyl chain having from about 5 to about 17 carbon atoms and L is a leaving group:

b) a bleach activator of the general formula:



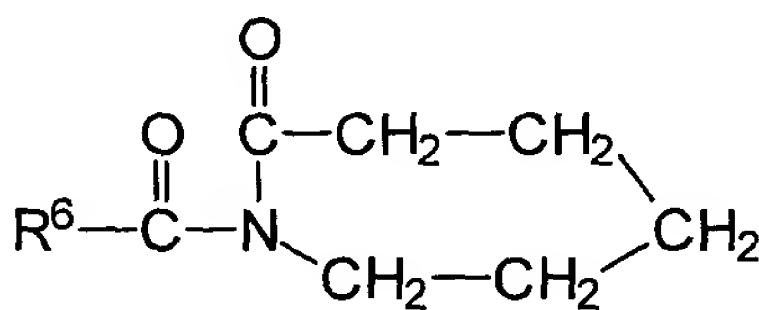
or mixtures thereof, wherein R¹ is an alkyl, aryl, or alkaryl group containing from about 1 to about 14 carbon atoms, R² is an alkylene, arylene or alkarylene group containing from about 1 to about 14 carbon atoms, R⁵ is H or an alkyl, aryl, or alkaryl group containing from about 1 to about 10 carbon atoms, and L is a leaving group;

c) a benzoxazin-type bleach activator of the formula:



wherein R_1 is H, alkyl, alkaryl, aryl, or arylalkyl, and wherein R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , and R_5 may be the same or different substituents selected from the group consisting of H, halogen, alkyl, alkenyl, aryl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, amino, alkylamino, $-\text{COOR}_6$, wherein R_6 is H or an alkyl group, and carbonyl;

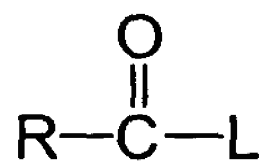
d) a N-acyl caprolactam bleach activator of the formula:



wherein R^6 is H or an alkyl, aryl, alkoxyaryl, or alkaryl group containing from 1 to 12 carbons; and

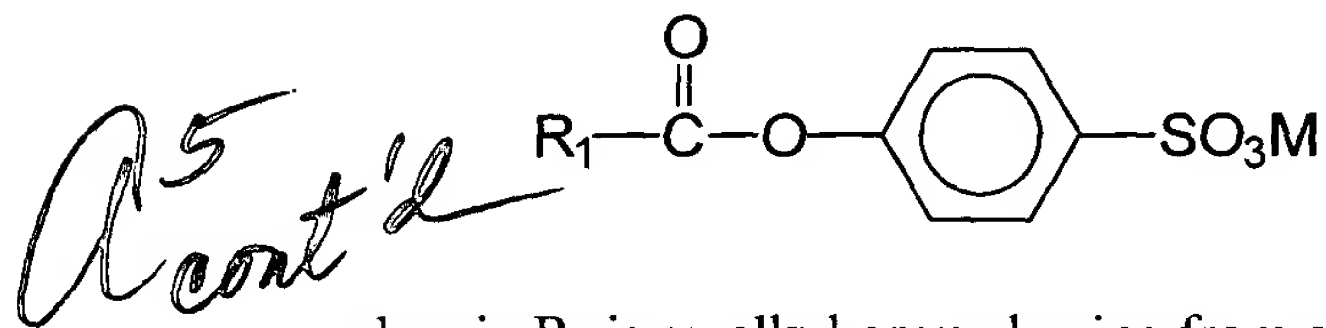
e) mixtures of a, b, c and d.

4. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 3 wherein said hydrophobic bleach activator is a bleach activator selected from the general formula:



wherein R is an alkyl chain having from about 7 to about 12 carbon atoms and L is a leaving group, the conjugate acid of which has a pK_a from about 4 to about 13.

5. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 4 wherein said bleach activator is an alkanoyloxybenzenesulfonate of the formula:



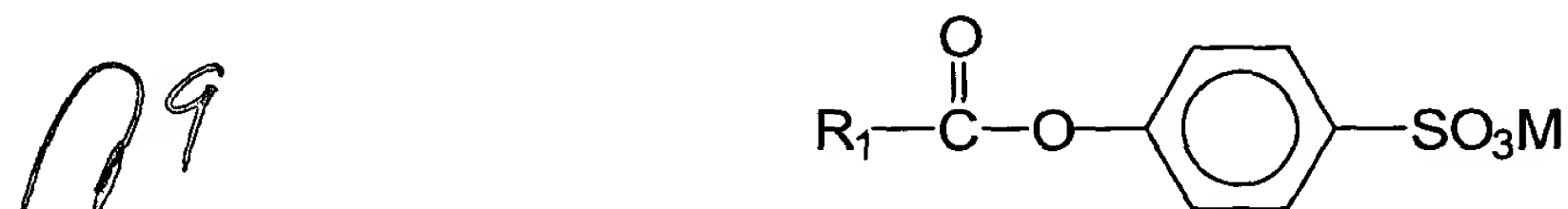
wherein R₁ is an alkyl group having from about 7 to about 11 carbon atoms and M is a suitable cation.

A⁶ 9. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said textile component remains in contact with said bleaching solution for from about 15 to about 180 minutes.

A⁷ 11. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 8 wherein said bleaching solution is at a temperature of from about 50 to about 80°C and said textile component remains in contact with said bleaching solution for from about 30 to about 60 minutes.

A⁸ 15. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 12 wherein said treated textile component experiences a fiber degradation increase of less than about 25%.

19. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 18 wherein said bleach activator is an alkanoyloxybenzenesulfonate of the formula:



wherein R₁ has from about 5 to about 17 carbon atoms and M is a suitable cation.

21. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 18 wherein said bleaching

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solution is at a temperature of from about 50 to about 80°C and said textile component remains in contact with said bleaching solution for from about 30 to about 60 minutes.

24. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 18 wherein said textile

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component remains in contact with said bleaching solution for from about 30 to about 60 minutes.

29. (Amended) The substrate as claimed in Claim 28 wherein said treated textile

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component experiences a fiber degradation increase of less than about 25%.

33. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said non-finished

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textile component fibers are selected from the group consisting of cotton, linen, jute, wool, silk, rayon, lyocell and combinations thereof.